

**TIPPECANOE COUNTY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 8, 2001**

The Tippecanoe County Council held a special meeting on Thursday, February 8, 2001 at 7:45 P.M. in the Tippecanoe Room in the County Office Building. Council members present were: President David S. Byers, Vice President Connie Basham, Ronald L. Fruitt, Jeffrey A. Kemper, Jeffrey Kessler, and Kathy Vernon; Auditor Robert A. Plantenga, Attorney Thomas H. Busch, and Secretary Pauline E. Rohr. (Councilmember Margaret K. Bell was absent.)

PUBLIC HEARING: Proposed Tax Rates

President Byers called the meeting to order for the purpose of hearing public comments regarding the requests for tax rates. The Tippecanoe County Public Library is requesting the establishment of a Capital Projects Fund and a 4¢ tax rate to fund it. The Wildcat Creek Solid Waste District is requesting the establishment of a 1.2¢ tax rate to fund their operating expenses.

Public Comments: Library

Charles Beattie, 624 Perrin Ave., Laf.: Mr. Beattie said he has spoken to his neighbors, many who are elderly and on fixed incomes, and they object to the additional tax for the Library. He cited the 50% increase for heating, the 33% increase for water, the 30% to 50% increase in gasoline pricing plus the unknown impact of Reassessment as reasons for a moratorium on any new taxes. Mr. Beattie said he has heard that, with the move to assessing at market value, residential property taxes could increase as much as 300%.

Marilyn Neie, 157 Ivy Hill Dr., W. Laf.: Mrs. Neie, a retired school librarian, urged the Council to consider the tax because books are expensive and the price increases each year. When she visits the Library, it is usually filled to capacity and she believes they do a good job.

Lou Pellegrino, 1105 Wells St., Laf.: Mr. Pellegrino is a retiree on a fixed income who volunteers at the Library daily. He said the Library saved approximately \$22,000.00 last year due to over 4,000 volunteer hours. He cited staffing and computer replacement as two reasons for approving the tax request.

Michael Sum, 60 Bent Tree Ct., W. Laf.: As President of Friends of the Library, Mr. Sum said the Library has basically been on a fixed income for years, but expenses have increased. He pointed out that this building was built because there were too many inadequacies with the old Wells Library building. In his opinion, it is less expensive to maintain this building than to let it go until serious repairs are needed. Mr. Sum said this additional tax may be a burden on those with fixed incomes but they can't be the determining factor when deciding whether or not this goes forward.

Bob Bowman, 291 Republican, Dayton: Mr. and Mrs. Bowman volunteer at the Library without which he thinks the County would be in bad shape.

Alan Kemper, 5710 E 700 S, Laf.: Speaking as the President of Farm Bureau, Mr. Kemper said he has not polled the members but they are not neutral on this issue as has been stated by some. They want children to be able to read and to be educated. He noted that 3% of his tax dollars goes to the Library. He thinks the Library has worked to be fiscally responsible and this is a worthy project. He cautioned that, if this tax increase is approved, the Council needs to look at lowering another tax to offset it.

Mary Hall, 2717 Newman Rd. W. Laf.: Although Mrs. Hall is a Friend of the Library, she discouraged the purchase of a new Bookmobile. She said every school has its own library and transportation is available to the Library from senior residences such as Friendship House. She disagrees with the Library's non-censorship policy that allows the availability of obscene materials to minors even though it is against the law for businesses to make it available. Mrs. Hall thinks parents should have control over what their children read and watch. She urged more effective spending of tax dollars.

Van Neie, 157 Ivy Hill Dr., W. Laf.: Mr. Neie is a retired educator but said schools are not the only source for learning. He admits that the tax increase will be a burden for some, but he thinks it may be more costly to do nothing.

Public Comments: Wildcat Creek Solid Waste Dist.

Sonya Margerum, 112 Seminole Dr. W. Laf.: Mrs. Margerum is the Mayor of West Lafayette and also President of the Wildcat Creek Solid Waste District Board. She explained that the Solid Waste District was established by the Legislature to plan for solid waste, encourage recycling, provide education to maintain the landfills, and provide for the future. The District was established with Clinton County to enable better regional planning. One of their most successful programs is for the disposal of household hazardous waste to protect our landfills and ground water. Educational efforts in schools and informational brochures help keep recyclables out of the landfill. She said West Lafayette is recycling approximately 50% of what is picked up on the street. Mrs. Margerum said constant funding is essential to continue the programs. Because she knows it has been the wish of some County Council members for the District seek its own tax rate, she urged support of the 1.2¢ tax rate so that its funding will no longer be in the County's Operating Budget.

Dawn Boston, Director of Wildcat Creek Solid Waste District: Mrs. Boston said that they offer the Green Team Waste Audit Program that teaches employees how to recycle. She said 45 of the 90 businesses that have taken the course, saved approximately \$125,000.00 per year in solid waste disposal fees. She suggested the use of their Guide for efficiency tips that she said could save an individual \$200.00 to \$400.00 annually on utility bills.

President Byers announced that the Council will plan to vote on these two tax rate requests at the March 13, 2001 meeting. Based on a handout from the Auditor of anticipated revenue, President Byers announced that a 4¢ tax rate will generate approximately \$617,000.00 for the Library. A 1.2¢ tax rate will generate approximately \$200,000.00 from Tippecanoe County for the Solid Waste District.

Attorney Busch pointed out that both taxes need to be adopted annually.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

Robert A. Plantenga, Auditor

TIPPECANOE COUNTY COUNCIL

David S. Byers, President

Ronald L. Fruitt

Connie Basham, Vice President

Jeffrey A. Kemper

Margaret K. Bell

Jeffrey Kessler

Attest: _____
Robert A. Plantenga, Auditor

Kathy Vernon